

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 672

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Chancellor George Alexander Heard of Vanderbilt University.

WHEREAS, it was with great sorrow and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of our State learned of the passing of George Alexander Heard of Nashville, a gentleman of the highest honor and integrity; and

WHEREAS, a distinguished scholar, acclaimed author, visionary leader, and valued advisor to three U.S. Presidents, Alexander Heard served with acumen and industry as the Chancellor of Vanderbilt University from 1963-82, ushering the prestigious school to national prominence; and

WHEREAS, George Alexander Heard was born on March 14, 1917, in Savannah, Georgia; his father was an engineer, inventor, and businessman and his mother a public school administrator. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina in 1938 and received both his graduate degree and doctorate from Columbia University in 1948 and 1951, respectively; and

WHEREAS, in his early career, Alexander Heard entered government service, working for the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Park Service, the Works Progress Administration, the Department of the Interior, the Office of Indian Affairs, the War Department, and the State Department; and

WHEREAS, from 1939 until 1941, he held the position of Administrative Officer, Health Division, United Pueblos Agency of the U.S. Indian Service and, from 1941-43, he was the American Vice Counsel and Assistant to the Chief, Economic Warfare Division at the American Embassy in Quito, Ecuador; and

WHEREAS, a member of this Nation's greatest generation, Mr. Heard proudly served in the United States Navy from 1943-46, rising to the rank of Lieutenant and seeing combat duty in the Pacific Theater at Lingayen Gulf, Philippines, and Okinawa, Japan; and

WHEREAS, after his service during World War II, Alexander Heard pursued a career in academia, assisting V.O. Key, Jr., at the University of Alabama in the now classic three-year study of Southern politics funded by the Rockefeller Foundation; the resulting landmark publication, *Southern Politics in State and Nation*, released in 1949, won national acclaim and recognition for Mr. Heard; and

WHEREAS, upon his return to his alma mater, Mr. Heard served as an associate professor of Political Science in 1950 and was named a full professor in 1952, after publishing his dissertation, *A Two Party South?*, in which he correctly forecast the emergence of a two-party system in the South; and

WHEREAS, completing his study on campaign financing with the publication of his next book, *The Costs of Democracy*, Alexander Heard was firmly established as one of the top scholars in the nation on the study of government; his prominence in this area garnered him the position of President of the Southern Political Science Association in 1961-62; and

WHEREAS, after serving as the Ford Research Professor of Government at Harvard University from 1957 until 1958, Dr. Heard was named Dean of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina in 1958, where he would remain until 1963, when he embarked upon his career as the Chancellor of Vanderbilt University; and

WHEREAS, having earned national acclaim and recognition, Alexander Heard would receive his first appointment as a presidential advisor in 1961 when he was named by President John F. Kennedy to chair the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Campaign Costs; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Alexander Heard also served as a presidential advisor to President Lyndon B. Johnson, who appointed him to the National Citizens' Committee for Community Relations in 1964, the Task Force on Education in 1966, and the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1967; and

WHEREAS, during the administration of President Richard M. Nixon, Chancellor Heard served on the Commission on White House Fellows from 1969 to 1971 and the Task Force on

Priorities in Higher Education in 1969; additionally, he was named a special advisor to the president on campus affairs; and

WHEREAS, in his role as the fifth Chancellor of Vanderbilt University, Alexander Heard quickly established an open and honest rapport with both the faculty and the students by holding quiet, regular meetings with student leaders, including those considered outspoken campus radicals; his encouragement and support led Vanderbilt students to create the Impact Symposium in 1964; today, the symposium is one of the longest-running student-operated speakers series in the nation; and

WHEREAS, standing steadfast behind the students when controversy and criticism arose over Symposium invitations to civil rights leaders Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Stokely Carmichael, Chancellor Heard stated that "The university's obligation is not to protect students from ideas, but rather to expose them to ideas, and to help make them capable of handling, and, hopefully, having ideas."; and

WHEREAS, leading Vanderbilt during the turbulent times of the 1960s and 1970s, when American college campuses coast to coast were roiled in turmoil and student unrest over such issues as Vietnam and civil rights, Chancellor Heard's stalwart character, courage, and abundant common sense enabled him to chart a relatively peaceful course for the institution; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Heard's remarkable tenure at Vanderbilt University included such milestones as the creation of the Owen Graduate School of Management, the merger with Peabody College in 1979, and, in 1981, the acquisition of the Blair School of Music through yet another merger; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Alexander Heard's legacy at Vanderbilt also includes his successful attempt in 1964 to place the first woman, Mary Jane Werthan, on the Board of Trustees; the admittance of Perry Wallace, the first black scholarship athlete in the Southeastern Conference; and the establishment of a new class of trustees by the board, at his request, comprised of four recent graduates who could provide youthful insight and perspective to the board; and

WHEREAS, retiring as Chancellor in 1982 to accept an offer from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to head a three-year study on the presidential election process, Alexander Heard

would later write two books on the subject, *Presidential Selection*, written with Michael Nelson and published in 1987, and *Made in America – Improving the Nomination and Election of President*, published in 1991; and

WHEREAS, sharing his keen insight and vast experience, Alexander Heard was a member of the Board of Trustees of the prestigious Ford Foundation from 1967-1987 and served as Chairman of the Board from 1972-1987; and

WHEREAS, in 1983, in recognition of his many years of distinguished service to the school, the Vanderbilt University Board of Trustees most appropriately named the Vanderbilt library system for Chancellor Heard and his wife, Jean; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Chancellor Heard was the recipient of numerous honors during his lifetime and had been awarded twenty-seven honorary degrees from such esteemed institutions as John Hopkins University, Dickinson College, Bard College, and the University of Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Alexander Heard was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Heard enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of sixty years, Jean Keller Heard, was the proud father of Stephen Heard, Christopher Heard, Cornelia Heard, and Frank Heard, and was the beloved grandfather of two treasured grandchildren, Alexander Michael Heard and George Alexander Meyer; and

WHEREAS, Alexander Heard leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the remarkable life of this exceptional scholar, public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of George Alexander Heard, reflecting fondly upon his bountiful life of academic excellence, his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Chancellor Heard.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.